

PRINCETON

A MODERN

Puss IN BOOTS



BY MINNIE B. SHELDON.

THE Bradys were moving. Now, moving is one thing with some persons and another thing with other persons. When some families move, professional packers at six dollars a day come in, and the work is done with beautiful neatness and despatch.

It was not so with the Brady family. They were their own packers-in-chief, and their assistants were not professionals—in fact, they were only Jim and Charlie Ryan, two boys aged respectively twelve and fourteen, from next door.

The Bradys and the Ryans lived away in the upper part of New York, on Eighth Avenue, very near the Manhattan Field and the Polo Grounds. If they had not lived so near the Manhattan Field it is very doubtful if Jim and Charlie would have been helping the Bradys to move. And for this reason. Because they lived so near the Field, of course they knew all that any boys could possibly know of everything which was going on there. This goes without saying. Were they not boys? Had they not eyes? And were there not knot-holes in the fence?

But not only did they know what had taken place within that charmed inclosure in the past,

they also knew precisely what was going to take place there in the future—the near future—only a few days later, in fact. The Great Football Game would be played there at that time; and was anything else in the world worth one moment's thought in comparison with the interest of that event? If you are in any doubt, just ask any two boys aged twelve and fourteen.

Now, such is the tyranny of League and Association managers that football games require tickets in order to be seen; and tickets cost money; and money with Jim and Charlie Ryan was very scarce.

Of course, as I have already said, there were still the knot-holes, but how exceedingly unsatisfactory they were, after all! To have those tantalizing glimpses of wild, rushing masses of men inside, to hear the shouts, to feel the excitement in the tingle of the chills running down one's back, and then to think of what it would be to hold in one's hand one of those magic bits of card which would enable a boy to pass unquestioned to a full view of all that was to be seen and enjoyed on the other side of those knot-holes,—that was the thought which inspired Jim and Charlie as they were helping

the Bradys to move. For Mr. Brady had done some work on the Field a few days before, and he had received two tickets of admission to the football game as part payment for his time there. And as he was now going away, and so could not use the tickets himself, he had offered them to the Ryan boys in return for such services as they could render in packing boxes, running errands, and otherwise making themselves useful. They had accepted the offer, of course: the tickets would soon be theirs, and their joy and gratitude were boundless.

Now Jim and Charlie had a little brother Tom. Tom was only eight, and perhaps you think his interest in football had not grown yet. Well, that shows how little you know of eight-year-old boys. Why, not even Jim or Charlie could possibly want to see that game more than Tom did! But alas! he was too little to help the Bradys; and even if he had not been, Mr. Brady had no more tickets to give to any one; and Tom had made up his mind that for him the knot-holes would be the only way. He hung around the Bradys' little stationery-store forlornly, hoping against hope that something would turn up whereby he might finally get a ticket; but the last day came, the boxes were all packed, Jim and Charlie received their reward, and still there was nothing for poor Tom.

At least, *almost* nothing. Just at the last moment Mrs. Brady came out of a back room with something soft and dark in her arms.

"Tom," she said, "I wish we had one o' them tickets for you, as you wants so much; but Mr. Brady, you see, he only got two, and them we've give to your brothers. But if you'd like this here cat, why, we can't take it with us, and you'd be welcome to it."

At this Jim and Charlie shouted derisively. *A cat!* And as a substitute for a ticket to the football game! Well, well! But little Tom thought that if he could not see the game he might as well take what he could get; so in spite of his brothers' jeers he held out his arms for the offered gift, and received for his share of the spoils an unusually large and handsome cat.

"What a pretty one!" he exclaimed, as he stroked its fur, and already began to feel the

pride and interest of ownership. "And what a funny color!"

It *was* an odd color — or colors. It was jet-black, with large tawny or orange stripes across its back and breast; and, both on this account and because of its unusual size, the cat would have attracted attention anywhere. Even Tom's brothers began to take a slight interest in it, as they realized its size and coloring, and then, as Jim was looking at it curiously, he suddenly exclaimed:

"I declare, if it ain't a Princeton cat! It's orange and black, as sure as you're born! Say, Tom, give it to me, will you?"

This was a little too much. That Jim, who had that precious ticket in his pocket, should now wish to possess the cat also! Even Charlie remonstrated.

"Don't you do it, Tom!" he advised. "Keep your cat yourself. Don't give it to anybody."

And Tom briefly responded:

"I ain't a-goin' ter!"

So it was that Tom acquired "Princeton"; so he kept Princeton for himself; and so, speedily, he became very fond of him, and, giving up all thought of the football game, devoted himself to his new acquisition.

This was all very well for a while. But the day of the game arrived, and then, inevitably, the old yearnings toward an entrance into the Manhattan Field came back in full force. Jim and Charlie were all excitement and anticipation, and immediately after breakfast on the day of the great game began to prepare for the coming event. Each boy put on his Sunday suit, brushed his hair, and blacked his boots; and hours before it was time to start both were ready and waiting. Poor little Tom! He had no pleasure in anticipation, and nothing to prepare for; and all he could do was to wander disconsolately about, with Princeton in his arms, and on his heart a great weight of longing and regret.

While it was still early, and long, long before it was time for the game, Jim and Charlie decided to set forth, their impatience having grown too great to allow them to stay at home another minute. Of course they could not get into the Manhattan Field at that hour of the day, but they wanted to be on the spot, at any

rate, and perhaps—who could tell?—something interesting and exciting might happen even as early in the morning as that. Tom went with them, and Princeton went with Tom, for these two had by this time become inseparable.

"Princeton could climb up to the top of the fence and look over," said Tom, and added mournfully, "I wish I could!"

By and by, after what seemed almost a week to the impatient boys, the entrance to the Field was opened, and a man began to take the admission tickets. Jim and Charlie went in at once, leaving Tom and Princeton outside.

Soon the spectators began to come, in crowds which grew larger and larger as the hour for the game drew nearer. Thousands of persons came pouring down the stairs from the elevated road, and thousands more from the horse-cars and cable-cars; while carriages of all kinds, full of gaily dressed persons, were constantly being driven to the Field through the large entrance.

Tom watched them wistfully. Every one of that vast multitude had a ticket. Every one went through

the gate and past that ticket-taker as freely and as easily as if the whole Field belonged to him alone. It seemed to Tom as if he were the only person in New York that day who did not see the football game if he wanted to do so. It was very hard. Still he stood

there, watching with eager, fascinated eyes, while he held Princeton tightly, lest the cat should be lost in the crowd.

Then presently the boy heard a great sound of shouts and cheering, and the mellow tone of a coaching-horn; and with a clatter, and the



"PRINCETON CAN'T GO WIDOUT ME," ANSWERED TOM."

cracking of a long whip, a four-in-hand tally-ho came dashing up. Its four seats were filled with young men—from Princeton, evidently—for the orange-and-black was everywhere conspicuous, on the coach, on the horses, and fluttering gaily from the buttonhole of each man's

greatcoat. They were a gay crowd altogether; and, as the coach came to a standstill near the entrance to the Field, Tom gazed at it and its occupants with open-eyed wonder and admiration. There were some carriages ahead of the coach, and it was stopped for a few moments just at Tom's side.

Suddenly, as they waited, one of the men on the front seat caught sight of Princeton.

"By the great horn spoon!" he exclaimed. "I say, fellows, look at that cat! Orange and black, by all that's wonderful! What a lark! We'll have it up here, and take it in to the game with us." Then, leaning forward, he called out to Tom, "I say, Johnny, will you lend us your cat for the day?"

"Well, you *have* a nerve!" cried one of the other young men to this. "The idea of asking the kid to let you have his cat for nothing!" Then he spoke to the now amazed and bewildered Tom. "Look here, young chap, do you want to sell that cat? What'll you take for it?"

Tom could hardly believe his ears. Did these remarkable young gentlemen really want Princeton? And if so, what for? He saw that they were all waiting for him to speak, and he came a little nearer to the coach.

"Is it my cat, Princeton, you wants, sir?" Tom asked, addressing the man who had asked him if he would sell his cat.

At this announcement of the cat's name, there was a shout of laughter from every man on the drag. Tom could not imagine what was the matter with them all.

"*Princeton?*" repeated one of the supporters of the orange-and-black. "*Princeton?* Is that really the name of that cat? Well, it's a good one, I declare! We'll have to have it now, sure. Come, Johnny, what will you take for it? Hurry up, now; we can't wait!"

But Tom was not to be hurried into anything of that kind. "Sell Princeton?" he thought quickly; "what an idea!" He would n't do it, not he! But he might as well know what they wanted to do with the cat if they could get him, so he asked, "What do you want to do wid him, sir?"

"Oh, we're not going to hurt him — we only want to take him inside because he is orange and black — Princeton colors, you know."

"Take Princeton inside!" exclaimed Tom, "and not *me*? Oh, no, sir!"

"What do you mean?" cried one of the men impatiently. "Of course we don't need you. What should we take you for? — we only want the cat."

"I would n't sell the cat, sir. Princeton, he can't go widout me," answered Tom to this, pluckily. And then his heart began to beat, thump! thump! What if they *should* take him?

Here was a dilemma for the Princeton men. With the impulsiveness of young men, they had set their hearts on having that orange-and-black cat on their coach during the football game. It would be such a mascot! But here was this stubborn boy who would not let his pet go without him. They looked at Tom, and then at one another. Then, by a common impulse, they all looked at the last seat on the drag, which was occupied by the two footmen only.

"We might put the kid in there," suggested one of them.

"We don't want the boy!" exclaimed another. But then he looked at Tom, and on Tom's face he saw an expression of great firmness. He saw something else, too — a look so eager and wistful that involuntarily his own expression softened.

"Oh, well," he said, relenting, "if we can't have the cat without the boy, we'll have to take the boy, I suppose. What do you say, fellows?"

"Oh, let him come!" cried the host of the party, impatiently. "Come, youngster, climb up, then, and hurry about it! We can't stay here all day — we're late now."

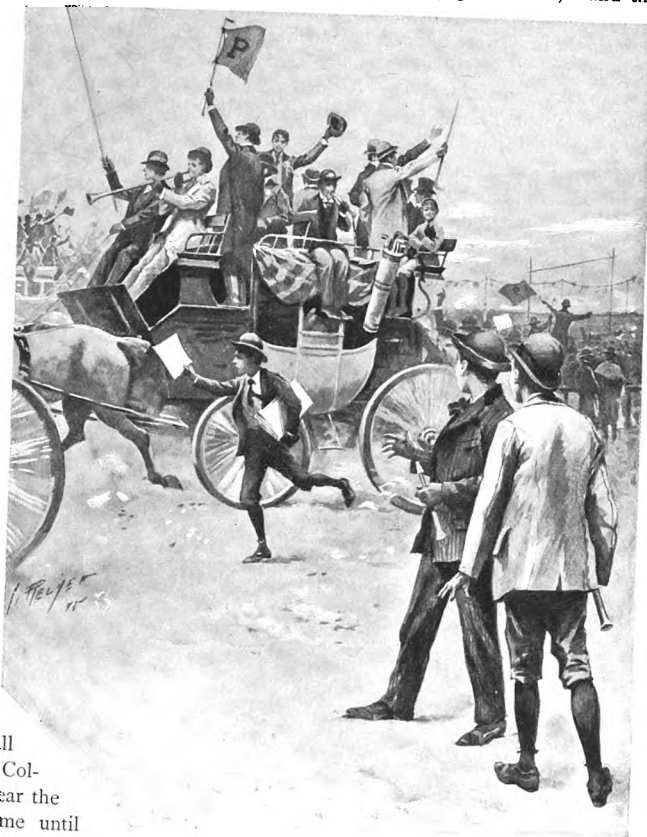
So Tom, hardly able to realize his good fortune, actually climbed up and took his seat upon that wonderful coach, at which, only five minutes before, he had been gazing as at something as far beyond him as a slice of the moon would have been. And now he was there, with all these jolly young gentlemen; and, more than all, he was actually going inside the gates of the Manhattan Field, where the football game would soon be played before his enraptured eyes.

And, sure enough, so it was, though it seemed too good to be true. The coach, with Tom on

it, was driven in, and was stopped in one of the best positions from which to see the game; and there Tom sat, blissfully happy, during all the time that the match was going on. The men around him talked excitedly of flying wedges, punts, touch-downs, and other mysteries; and at any point, whether small or great, scored by their college, they yelled and cheered in the wildest manner. Tom cheered with all his might when the others did; and as he sat there, his eager little face all flushed with pleasure and excitement, many a sympathizing glance was thrown in his direction, and many a spectator nudged his neighbor and remarked, "Look at the funny little chap up there on that drag."

As for Princeton, he was second only to the leviathans themselves in the interest and attention which he excited. His very first appearance on the ground was greeted by a chorus of cheers and shouts and laughter from all the friends of Princeton College who were anywhere near the match; and from that time until the game was over, the gay party on the drag was surrounded by an admiring crowd, among whom Tom's cat was the center of attraction. Tom himself was the object of any amount of good-natured chaff and banter, but he objected to it as little as Princeton objected to the attention which he received; neither boy nor cat was ever in such position before, and probably neither would be in such again; and the boy, at least, appreciated his privileges to the utmost.

But perhaps the crowning moment of all that joyful day was that in which Tom, on his lofty perch, was recognized by his brothers, Jim and Charlie. It was just after the game was over, and the crowds were pouring toward the gates, — to avoid the coming great crush,—and the



"TOM, LOOKING DOWN, SAW HIS BROTHERS."

drag on which Tom still sat, holding Princeton, was being driven briskly through the mass and tangle of other carriages which were hurrying to get out. Then, just as Tom's party was almost at the gate, Tom, looking down, saw his brothers, and at the same moment they saw him. They would hardly have believed that the boy in that exalted position was really little Tom if they had not seen the cat; but that settled the matter — that cat was

Princeton and no other. And so they pushed and elbowed their way until they were nearly under the wheels of the coach, so eager were they to ask Tom how he got there; and as Tom looked down at them, no king on his throne ever felt a greater sense of elation and satisfaction than did Tom. But the boys, when they reached the drag, were, after all, too much in awe of those magnificent flunkies on the seat with Tom to ask any questions. They decided to wait, in the mean time running along by the side of the coach until it was beyond the gates. There it stopped; and Tom, after a few eager thanks to his hosts, and many laughing good-bys from the young men, descended from his dizzy height, and was once more on the ground. Jim

and Charlie rushed up to him at once; and then questions and answers fairly flew back and forth between Tom and his brothers till the whole history of the adventure had been told.

At its finish Jim drew a long breath and looked at Tom with shining eyes.

"Well!" he exclaimed, "you had the best of it, did n't you, young un? How'd you feel, anyway, up there on that coach with all them swells around you?"

"Well," said Tom—"I felt—I felt like a fairy story," he declared finally; and then he added, as he hugged his cat more closely, "And Princeton was a regular fairy godmother, was n't he? No; I'll tell you what—Princeton was my Puss in Boots!"



AT RECESS. THE DANCING BEAR.